



SitRep 10

BUDGET – Cuts, cuts and more cuts.

The Liberal and National Government has cut the capital budget of Fire and Rescue NSW by 35.4 per cent. In addition, there are \$12.9 million dollars of cuts in expenses. On top of this the Government have not budgeted an additional cent to cover the costs of our new Cancer Legislation supporting firefighters who have cancer from exposure at work. In addition, the Liberal Government included in the budget significant cuts to Long Service Leave entitlements for all new public sector workers.

The demand on us as workers and our services, such as fire, rescue, hazardous materials, urban search and rescue increases as the population grows and as our towns and cities develop. There are many growing communities, particularly in regional NSW, who do not have enough professional firefighters. There are some towns with no professional firefighters.

We have fewer firefighters now than we did eight years ago. Our trucks are old. We need more specialist equipment, not less. Some of our existing stations desperately need updating. We need safe protective uniforms and safe equipment. We need training. We need support after traumatic events. There is no fat to cut.

We have asked to meet with the Minister three times since the State Election he ignored us until the day before the Budget came down. We don't need to wonder why... We are meeting with the Minister next week and we look forward to him explaining to us where he expects these cuts to come from.

What does the budget mean for us? We are already stretched thin. These budget cuts will be bad for us as workers and bad for our communities. Members should report any moves to make savings – big or small- to delegates and SCOM reps.

We are heading into Award negotiations with our Department in a situation where they will have less money in their budget. A significant amount has been taken from the 'expenses' budget – which is largely made up of our wages. The FBEU will not accept any cuts at the frontline.

Firefighters cannot do more with less.

STOP PRESS: I attended parliament this week and alongside other Public Sector unions made urgent representations to stop the Long Service Leave cuts. We believe this has been successful. This means new recruits will not have less Long Service Leave entitlements than current members.

Water On! Seven years on...

Seven years ago today hundreds of FBEU members took strike action and washed the Parliament for Workers Compensation and won. When the NSW Liberal Government made moved to cut entitlements to workers compensation you were outraged and organised.

The SCOM voted to take strike action and called a meeting of members at the FBEU office in Surry Hills. The office was not big enough to fit all those who attended to endorse the action.

And then on June 21, 2012 – firefighters from across Sydney, Newcastle and the Illawarra went out on strike.



SitRep 10

Hundreds and hundreds of you and your appliances made your way to Macquarie Street and it was there that you held what is thought to be the biggest FBEU meeting ever. The meeting blocked the street and there was only one motion – and that was if you would turn the water on the house. It was endorsed unanimously. That night – the Liberal government backed down and we won.

Seven years is a long time. Hundreds of our newer members were not there that day, if you were there and you get the chance, be sure to tell them about your experience on the day. It's a great strength in unity FBEU story of the ability of union to stand together, take action and win.

Member Survey – Out this week

The FBEU is working on ways to increase your participation and ability to have a say. There is no better way to understand what you think than to ask you. To begin this work we have sent surveys to all members who have an email address on our membership system. If you did not receive the survey this week – please get in touch with office@fbeu.net to check your details are up-to-date.

We've had a great response so far. If you have not done it yet, please do.

The Permanent Member Survey is here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FBEU012019P>

The Retained Member Survey is here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FBEU012019R>

The survey will help us to:

- Get an idea of your thoughts about the up-coming Award and lots of other things.
- Put in place a variety of ways for you to have a say into the future.
- Support you to maintain and grow participation and activity in your union.
- Map your delegates and allocate SCOM and staff to assist where you don't have them.

The survey should take about 15 minutes. It closes on July 3, 2019

Leighton Drury
State Secretary